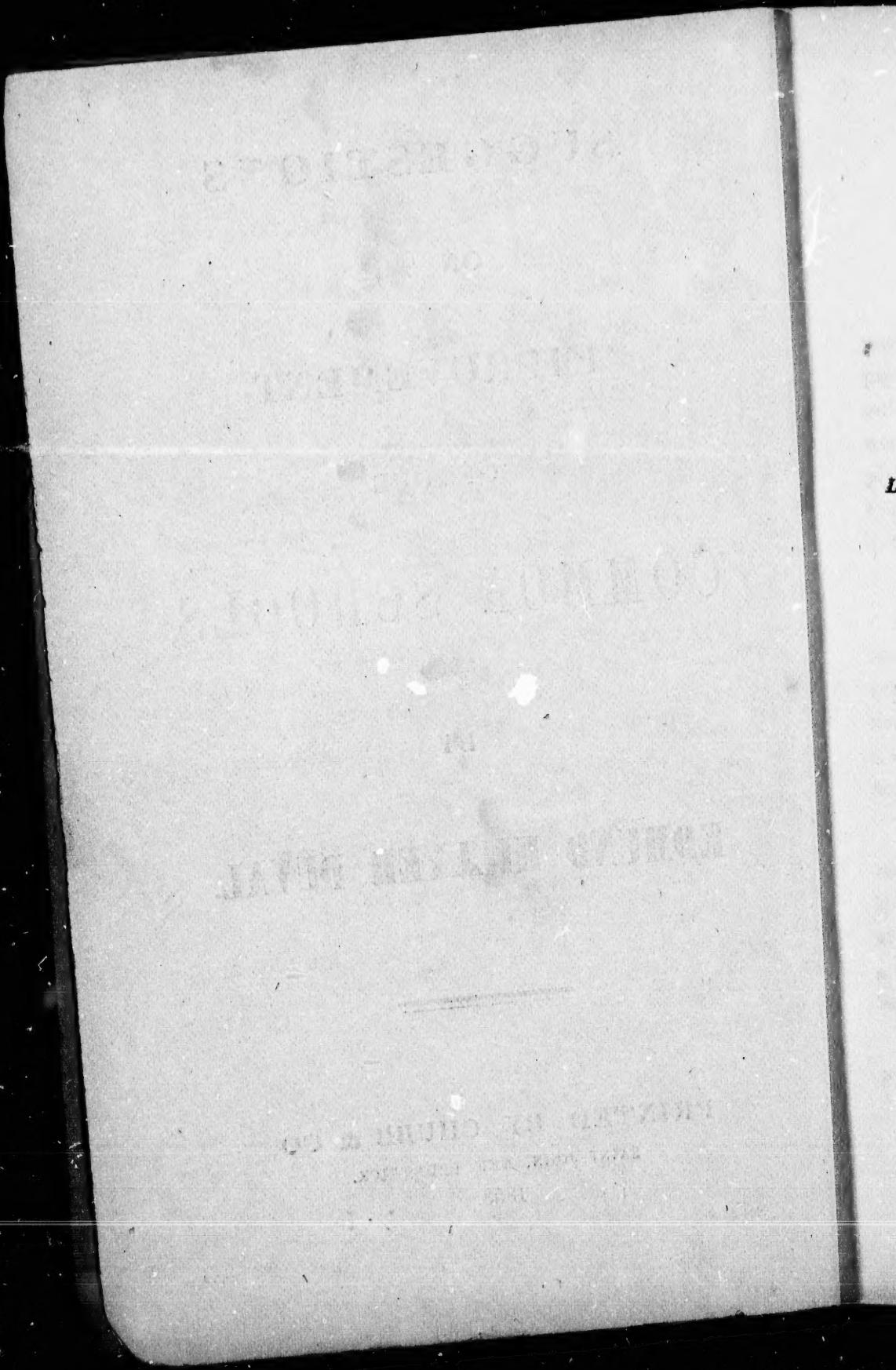


1858

**SUGGESTIONS
ON THE
IMPROVEMENT
OF OUR
COMMON SCHOOLS,
BY
EDMUND HILLYER DUVAL.**

**PRINTED BY CHUBB & CO.
SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK.
1858.**



TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE HONORABLE
JOHN HENRY THOMAS MANNERS SUTTON,
*Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Province of
New Brunswick, &c. &c. &c.*

TO THE HONORABLE
THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

TO THE HONORABLE
THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E.

SOME time since the Author of the following Pages was applied to by the proprietor of one of our weekly papers to write a series of articles on the subject of Education. As the subject just now is invested with more than usual interest, he, for a while, entertained the idea of complying with that request ; but upon mature reflection he resolved, for several reasons, to publish his thoughts in the form of a Pamphlet.

It will be seen that it has not been designed to write a treatise upon education, but simply to offer such remarks and suggestions on the present and future of our common schools as, it was thought, would lead to their improvement. Our higher institutions of learning have been occasionally adverted to, but only when it appeared to be necessary to do so.

It is not supposed that every reader will concur in all the sentiments advanced : it is known that the contrary will be the case ; but the author lays them before the public as the honest conviction of his own mind, asks for them a candid consideration, and then, is willing that they shall be taken for what they may be considered to be worth.

PROVINCIAL TRAINING SCHOOL, SAINT JOHN, }
27TH JANUARY, 1858. }

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SUGGESTIONS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR COMMON SCHOOLS?

THE Provincial Act for establishing, supporting, and regulating, Common Schools, expires on the first of May, and before that period it must either be renewed or superseded by another enactment. That it will be simply renewed and its present defects perpetuated, is scarcely probable. This has been done once or twice; perhaps the emergencies of the times justified the Legislature in so doing. The time has now come when definite and decided action must be taken. The subject is one said to be beset with difficulties, but whatever those difficulties may be, they must be encountered vigorously.

It is to be hoped that this important subject will be approached by every one simply with a determination to devise those measures that may be best adapted to secure for the youths of the Province of both sexes, a solid, useful education, which may fit them in every respect for the actual duties of life. It is not a party question and should not be made one; it affects equally the interests of all parties and affords a noble platform where good men, whatever their sentiments may be, may unite and allow their patriotism to rise superior to political interests and sectional differences. This course has happily been pursued on former occasions.

Our College, Grammar Schools and Common Schools, may all require revision, but as the objects sought in each, are, in some respect, distinct from the others, it would probably be better that they should form subjects for separate legislation; for however magnificent it may appear to be to get up a scheme that would embrace the whole, it would inevitably be so complicated as to embarrass legislation and probably lead to a defeat of the measure. If each branch is legislated upon separately, there need be no difficulty in securing harmony in the several enactments; and then, if either act should be found to be defective, it could be amended without unnecessarily opening the whole subject anew. This course has been pursued hitherto without disadvantage, and will probably be the safest to adopt on the present occasion.

The question has sometimes been raised, whether or not, the

State should do anything for promoting popular education? Not long since this point was argued at some length in an editorial of one of our provincial papers. The writer, to his own satisfaction at least, concluded that the provincial grants should be entirely withheld, and the education of youth be thrown on the parents to have them instructed or not as they may choose. But whether the rising race should be educated or not, is not a question simply affecting individual families, but the whole community. Only very recently, one, who was confessedly a great criminal, had mercy extended to him, probably from several reasons, one of which was the ignorance in which he had been brought up by his parents; but this criminality on the part of parents would be shared by the state, if it neglected to give to youths the opportunity of understanding those laws which they are expected to obey.

The public sentiment, however, of New Brunswick (with which I fully concur,) is so decidedly in favour of encouraging education by grants of public money that it may be regarded as a settled question. The only question now, being how that money may be most judiciously spent, so as to aid the promotion of virtue and intelligence, give security to life and property, and perpetuate those civil and religious liberties, which, probably we enjoy to a greater extent than any other people on the globe.

It is not proposed to give in this pamphlet any draft of a new School Bill; that task will fall into other hands. It will be taken up by those who are fully competent to perform it properly. It is not even proposed to suggest any enactment, widely different to the present School Law; but simply to advert to some points of the present act which are supposed to need amendment. It will be taken for granted, that so far as we have gone, our legislation has been fundamentally correct; and that what is now required, is to improve some parts of the superstructure rather than to be again and for ever seeking to lay new foundations; with this intention the following suggestions are made.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The present law provides for the establishment of a Provincial Board of Education to which body considerable power is assigned. It has always appeared to me that in one respect this Board was established on a wrong basis. A separate and independent body of well qualified men should have been appointed in the first instance, and the work should not have been thrown on the Executive Council, who by the present law form the Board.

In 1847 the Hon. James Brown, who had charge of the original bill, proposed that a Board of Education should be appointed by His Excellency in Council, but the clause, being opposed, was

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withdrawn, and at the suggestion of one of the members, the Executive Council was constituted as that Board on the score of economy. Perhaps at that time it was better to concede the point rather than to endanger the passing of the bill. But it could easily be foreseen that an alteration would become necessary, or that the cause of education must suffer.

The Board should consist of gentlemen whose attention has been devoted "con amore" to the subject of popular education, who have acquainted themselves with the great principles it involves, and are well informed in the improved methods successfully adopted by intelligent teachers in modern times. Not mere theorists, but practical men, who can act in unison and sympathy with those on whom the arduous and responsible duty of public instruction devolves.

Now, it is altogether too much to expect this from the Executive Council as it is generally constituted. They may be gentlemen who feel interested in popular education, or they may not. The probability is, that with regard to some of them such will not be the case. They receive their appointment simply on political grounds. They are men whose talents qualify them to take the lead in the political debates of the House of Assembly, and whose discretion commends them as suitable men to carry out the details of government in the Council Room. It by no means follows that they are also qualified to direct the affairs of our educational institutions; the reverse may be the fact. It may be a subject to which they have never given any attention, and for which they have no taste.

But, taking it for granted that they may all be fully qualified for the work, yet they have necessarily so much to do besides, that it is utterly unreasonable to expect them to be able to do justice to education. The multifarious duties that devolve upon them, and the weight of anxieties they have to sustain are quite sufficient without being required to attend to the minute details of public instruction and give them that patient attention that their importance demands.

I would suggest, that however the Board may be constituted, at least one of the members of the government should belong to it; not because he holds any particular office, but because he is judged from his previous habits and predilections to be the most suitable man.

The Board might consist of five, seven, or nine members, who might belong to either branch of the Legislature, or to neither; chosen, not on account of any political party bias, nor to support any sectional interests, but simply on account of their literary standing and their adaptation to promote the education of the coun-

try ; it is also important that they should be gentlemen in whom the community at large may fairly place implicit confidence. The Chief Superintendent of Schools should be ex-officio a member of the Board and act as Secretary at its meetings.

The particular duties of the Board, will, of course, be defined by the Act of Assembly and will be, doubtless, nearly similar to those that are imposed upon it now.* I would suggest that the meetings of the Board take place at certain fixed periods, so that parties interested may always know when they may send in their communications.

The meetings need not, probably, be held more frequently than once in three months, and, as the members would have to come to the place of meeting from different parts of the province, they should be sufficiently remunerated, so as, at least, to sustain no personal loss while attending to the service of the public.

I cannot pass from this subject without saying that the above remarks are not made from any personal wish in the matter, but from a conviction that such a change would be highly conducive to the well-being of our public schools.

I have been engaged between nine and ten years under the direction of the Board, and always, under every modification or change in the ministry, have received the kindest treatment. So that if personal feelings were regarded, I should prefer that matters remain as they are.

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT.

This office is one of unquestionable importance. The value of the whole system, and the success of its working depends in a great measure upon the adaptation of this officer to his work and to the facilities afforded him for the discharge of his responsible duties.

“The right man in the right place” is a phrase that has now, by frequent and indiscriminate use, almost degenerated into an expression of mere political cant. It is a sentiment, however, on which real progress depends. But it must be borne in mind that if the man is entirely shorn of his strength his qualifications for the office must become to him only a vexatious nullity. Such has been the position of both the gentlemen who, up to this time have held the office. No matter what amount of energy they may have possessed, no matter how much experience they may have had, or devotedness to their work, they could not perform efficient service.

Their salary was barely sufficient to enable them to live credita-

* At present the Chief Superintendence and Inspectors are appointed by the Governor in Council. If these appointments were made by the Board of Education the Government should have power to remove such officers should they take advantage of their position for the furtherance of political objects.

bly and utterly insufficient to enable them to travel, which should be an essential part of the duties of the office. In addition to this, it was impossible for them to leave home, having to attend in the office to the daily routine of duties, which reduced them to the position of mere clerks, while dignified with the high sounding title of Chief Superintendent of Schools.

It is well that our Legislature should jealously guard against improvident expenditure, but it is a matter of essential importance that economy should not be carried so far as to interfere with the efficiency of the public service. False economy is real extravagance. The Chief Superintendent fills a responsible office and should be proportionately paid.

An active, intelligent, urbane, experienced and practical man, visiting, under the direction of the Board every part of the province, exercising a general supervision of the schools, and delivering lectures, might infuse such a spirit in the public mind as would awaken parents from their apathy, and induce them to secure for their children, even at a personal sacrifice, a thorough education.

To enable the Chief Superintendent to discharge such duties provision must be made for employing a clerk in the office to attend to the ordinary routine of duties, preparation of statistics, &c., &c.

Our educational interests so worked out, would, in a few years present altogether a different aspect to what they do at present. The miserable hovels, called school-houses, standing by the road sides, as monuments of our shame, would speedily disappear; and neat, commodious, well ventilated and elegant buildings, would be erected in their places. These would be occupied by good teachers, and the revenues of the province, now expended generously, would be expended wisely as well.

This is no fancied picture of what might be done, it is almost a history of what has been done in Upper Canada, Massachusetts, and other places.

Dr. Ryerson, in Upper Canada, and the Hon. Horace Mann, in Massachusetts, have each exemplified what can be done by a devoted active man to regenerate the Common Schools of a country. Besides visiting every part of their own land, they each visited Great Britain and the continent of Europe to acquaint themselves with the improvements suggested by the growing intelligence of the age; and each can look with happy satisfaction to the results of the labours in which he has been engaged.

SCHOOL INSPECTION.

Considerable difference of opinion exists as to the value of school inspection. It is unquestionably of little value unless the duties are faithfully discharged by competent men.

Were parents alive to their children's interests, and capable of judging, as to the qualifications of teachers and the efficiency of schools, the appointment of such officers would not be so important. But, generally, such is not the case. When our schools are supported by Local Assessment and parents feel more decidedly that they are paying for their children's instruction, they will be more anxious to see that they have worth for their money, and School Inspectors may not be so necessary as at present. But perhaps under no circumstances would it be wise to dispense altogether with this kind of agency. A friendly inspection, by a competent man, interested in education, would always be productive of good.

Faithful, industrious, intelligent teachers would be encouraged by knowing that their self-denying toils were not altogether lost sight of, but were occasionally brought under the notice of those who would understand their difficulties, sympathize with them in their cares, advise them in perplexity and mark those improvements which were made by their persevering labours. On the other hand unfaithful and incompetent teachers would retire from the positions they hold, because they could not endure that their unfitness for office should be brought under constant review.

Of the value of inspection I have not the shadow of a doubt. This opinion is supported by that of a numerous band of teachers with whom I am acquainted, both in this province and the old country. And further, having myself in the old country filled the office of School Inspector, I have had from personal observation the most satisfactory evidence of the salutary effects of such visits, in promoting the efficiency of schools.

It is, however, imperatively necessary that the men selected should be properly qualified for the work, otherwise, success need not be expected. It is not every man who might covet the office that is competent to discharge its duties. Objections have been raised in the province to inspection from the alleged unfitness of some who have filled the office. This is neither wise nor just. If unsuitable men have in any case been employed let them be removed and more suitable men take their places, but let us not abolish a useful office, from any supposed or real incompetency of any particular officer.

In the original draft of the present School Law, it was proposed to appoint three inspectors, who should divide the province among them, and devote their whole time to the work. This was overruled in the discussion, and the present plan of County Inspectors adopted. It was believed, then, by some practical men that the House had made a mistake in the matter, and it is now pretty generally thought that the work would be more efficiently done by a smaller number of men with a remuneration that would enable them to devote to it the whole of their time.

Several qualifications are indispensable to the successful discharge of the duties of this office.

First. The Inspectors should have *a practical acquaintance with the duties of a Common School*. Without this they cannot have the confidence either of the teachers, or of the community at large; but the confidence of the parties interested is absolutely necessary to the happy and successful discharge of their duties.

It is not imperative that they should have been actually teachers, but it is essential that they should by some means have acquired a thorough acquaintance with the work of education; for it is manifestly absurd that persons should assume the superintendence, oversight and regulation of institutions, of the working of which they are altogether unacquainted.

It is necessary, too, that *the Inspectors should have a thorough knowledge of all the recent improvements in imparting instruction*.

They should be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of progress that marks the present age; not men who would repress advancement by tying teachers down to antiquated methods that were in use in their own early days; but men, who are ready to adopt those improvements that are suggested by the growing intelligence of the age.

On the other hand it is important that *they should take a plain, sound, practical view of Education*. Not carried away with a love of untried theories and whimsical fancies. Always ready to adopt every real improvement, but judiciously avoiding experiments that have not been maturely considered.

Again. *The Inspectors should be men of active habits*. The office is by no means a sinecure. It is unsuited to a lover of ease. It will necessarily involve much self-denial, and any one who is not prepared for that should not accept the appointment. It would be an advantage too if he should be able as well as the Superintendent to lecture on education. The inefficiency of our schools springs in a great measure from the ignorance and indifference of the people. They need information. Light must be diffused.

The Inspectors should also collect the teachers in central places for friendly conference, in which the teachers should be invited to take part freely. Much might thus be done to improve the character and condition of our schools, and teachers who are sometimes dejected by their isolated position, would be instructed, stimulated and encouraged.

Such meetings under the name of "Teachers' Institutes" are frequently held in the States, with the best results.

But, lastly, it is necessary that the *Inspectors should not be active political partisans*.

Every man in a free country is undoubtedly entitled to the priv-

ileges of a citizen, may vote for whom he chooses, and may engage in political life as zealously as he pleases. But while to every man the right must be awarded it may not be expedient that that right should under all circumstances be exercised. There are positions where it may be requisite to maintain neutrality. The office of School Inspector is one of this kind. The cause of education is a sacred one. If persons, holding prominent offices in the educational department, become active political partizans, there is great danger of their injuring those interests that they ought to esteem as sacred. Should any one feel that he cannot forego the exercise of his political rights, he should avoid a position that embarrasses his movement, debars him from duties that he feels he ought to discharge and from privileges that he ought to enjoy.

But there are other reasons why a School Inspector should not be an active political partizan. No one could be in a better position for exercising a powerful influence either for or against any political party; or be a more efficient canvasser should he choose to avail himself of his position. It is evident that no Ministry strong enough to act would tolerate such a state of things. They would naturally displace a man who was undermining their interests, and perhaps supply the vacancy by a man devoted to their party. We should thus probably have a change of Inspectors with every change in the Ministry, and these changes made, not for the promotion of education, but simply from political considerations, and thus the Inspectors would become mere political agents, and their high moral position would be entirely sunk.

The above remarks are not intended to have the slightest application to any particular individual, nor to any political party. If they affect any party at all, they affect all parties alike. The only intention is to show that *Inspectors should not be active political partizans.*

NORMAL SCHOOLS.

The value of such institutions has sometimes been called in question. But the few who have opposed their establishment or denied their utility have, unfortunately for themselves, the whole civilized world against them. In Prussia, Austria, France, Holland, Great Britain, New England, some of the Middle States, Nova Scotia and Canada, in fact in almost every free country, and in some where despotism rules, these schools are not only established but efforts are made to consolidate and multiply them. In our own province but little has been done as yet. To aim at improvement and advancement is manifestly our duty; to go back would be barbarous.

The following extract from Barnard's School Architecture gives the history and the advantages of Normal Schools with such brevity and distinctness that we cannot do better than to give it:—

"In 1735 the first regular seminary for teachers in Prussia was established in Pomerania, and the second at Berlin in 1748.

Normal Schools were introduced into Hanover in 1757; into Austria in 1767; into Switzerland in 1805; into France in 1808; into Holland in 1816; into Belgium in 1843 and into England in 1842.*

In Prussia and most of the German States, there are now enough of these institutions to supply the demand for teachers in the public schools. Saxony, with a population less than that of the State of New York, supports five Normal Schools, and Saxe Weimar, with a population less than that of Connecticut, supports two. Prussia with a population of fourteen millions, has at this time (1848) forty nine seminaries, in which there are nearly three thousand teachers. At the end of three years after leaving the Seminary, the young teachers return for a re-examination.

In Great Britain, after years of strenuous effort on the part of the friends of popular education, the importance of Normal Schools, as the chief means of improving the qualifications of teachers, has been recognized by the Government. The Training School at Chelsea, (called St. Mark's College,) under the management of the National Society, the Normal and Model School of the British and Foreign School Society, the Battersea Training School, and the Model School of the Infant School Society, in England; the Model School of the National Board for Ireland, the Normal Schools at Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland, are all aided out of the annual parliamentary grant for education.

One fact is certain, the improvement of schools in every country has followed hand in hand with the establishment, multiplication and improvement of Normal Schools."—*School Architecture, page 122.*

The closing sentence of this extract is strikingly applicable to this province, though less has been done here than elsewhere because the efforts made have been cramped by the limited provisions of the School Law.

No one, however, who compares the schools and teachers as they are at present, in every section of the province, with what they were ten years ago can deny with truth but that a very great improvement has been made. The class of dissipated old men, who, at that time, almost monopolized the work, have nearly disappeared and their places supplied by intelligent, sober, respectable young men and women, to whom the community may safely confide the rearing of their offspring.

The educational standard of many of these young people is confessedly below what it ought to be; but when it is remembered how limited the opportunities of some of them have been, and that they are only required to spend twelve weeks at the Training School, we presume that not much more should be expected from them.

But it should be borne in mind, that however deficient some may be, we have, scattered in different parts of the province, teachers, who for their ability and intelligence would be a credit to any country in the world.

* 1842 was the period when the Normal Schools of Great Britain received government aid. They were established much earlier; one by Joseph Lancaster at the close of the last century.

In addition to those who attended the Training School in Fredericton, there have been admitted into the school in St. John in nine years and a half 730 teachers and candidates of whom 390 were males and 343 females. But, in consequence of the little encouragement for continuing in the work very many of them have sought employment in other occupations. Of the females, a large proportion have changed their positions. Of the males, a large proportion have devoted themselves to the learned professions.

So far as I have information at present there are eight physicians and six medical students, one attorney-at-law and one law student, four ordained clergymen and five divinity students, two editors and five students at college who have not decided as to their profession.

If it is thought to be an objection that teachers, after attending the Training School do not continue in the employment, steps must be taken to render their position more desirable; otherwise it may naturally be expected that they will accept any eligible offer for bettering their condition. This, I presume, will be one of the objects aimed at in the anticipated School Law.

It may appear at first sight to be a misappropriation of the provincial funds to educate young men at the Training School for other professions than that of teaching. This, however, is more apparent than real. A large proportion of the provincial funds is devoted to Common Schools, Grammar Schools, Seminaries and the College, to fit our young men for different professions and callings, and if they obtain a part of that education in the Normal School it is only carrying out the intentions of the Legislature somewhat indirectly. It is not pretended that the adoption of a professional life has always resulted from the course of studies pursued in the Training School, many of the gentlemen having decided that point before their entrance; but it is unquestionably true that some of them had not the slightest idea of such pursuits, till their dormant powers were stimulated by the effort made to give an intellectual character to those exercises that before had only been performed by rote.

It is, notwithstanding, a very desirable thing to retain the services of intelligent, well-educated men in our schools; and it is much to be regretted that they should feel compelled to leave an employment which they have deliberately chosen, because they do not meet with sufficient encouragement in it. This, to my certain knowledge, has often been the case.

This evil can only be obviated by generously rewarding them for their services and by the removal of vexatious and useless regula-

tions which annoy teachers without benefiting the public. Some of these annoyances will be hereafter referred to.

But, whatever may be done to retain valuable teachers, by making their position desirable and honorable, changes will take place, and vacancies occur, so as to render it always needful to maintain an efficient Normal School.

It is scarcely necessary to remark that the present term of twelve weeks is altogether insufficient. If, indeed, *instruction in the Art of teaching* were the only point that required attention, the time would be enough. But that course, simply, is not pursued in any Normal School in existence. Everywhere, whether the term of attendance is long or short, opportunity is taken to give instruction, not merely as to how information is to be imparted, but also in the branches which the candidates are required to teach. This course, though not required by the law, has invariably been pursued in the Training School in St. John. The object sought has been, not to give so much instruction, merely as the letter of the law required, but as much as the teachers could profitably attend to. It has been found that a large majority of those who attend the Training School need much instruction in the branches which they are required by the law to teach; they are therefore constantly employed in storing their minds with those subjects, as well as receiving instruction in the theory and practice of teaching. To pursue this course satisfactorily, twelve months would be requisite instead of twelve weeks.

The course pursued in this Province, has been precisely that which has been followed in the establishment of Normal Schools everywhere else. They have commenced with terms of three or six months, and these terms have been enlarged to one, two, or three years.

Our term should now be lengthened. A minimum period should be fixed, but no Diploma or License be granted till efficiency is proved by a satisfactory examination.

I believe, too, that it would be a decided improvement if only two classes of license were issued, abolishing the third class altogether. It might seem to be an advantage to have third class teachers for poor and remote settlements, where others could not be supported; but no method has yet been found to restrict them to such localities. They are often found occupying important stations to the exclusion of well-informed teachers; engaged by the short-sighted policy of parents who are anxious to obtain cheap teachers: indulging in parsimony just in the point where generosity would be true wisdom.

This may be a convenient place to make a remark upon the classification of teachers. By the present School Law the difference between a male teacher of the first and second class consists in the

ability of one to teach the mathematics in addition to the branches taught by the other. It sometimes happens that teachers who possess a large amount of general knowledge and a superior talent for teaching, but at the same time no taste for mathematical pursuits, are in the same class with the simplest rustics who can just manage to pass a sufficient examination in the lower branches, and in addition have a "passable" knowledge in mathematics, but can carry on conversation on no subject beyond the routine of school matters. They have had no opportunities for mingling with intelligent society and no taste for so doing. They have read scarcely anything and are incapable of joining in a general conversation. These, however, take first class licenses, and the intelligent, educated, gentlemanly young men, with a happy method of imparting instruction, have to take a second class license because they have not pursued their mathematical studies so as to stand a satisfactory examination. In classification regard should surely be had to general information as well as mathematics.

BUILDINGS FOR TRAINING AND MODEL SCHOOLS.

Before closing this part of the subject I must advert to what has been justly a matter of complaint. I mean the neglect, up to this time, of providing suitable premises for the Provincial Normal School.

For the Training School at Fredericton a School Room was erected and furnished, and a residence provided for the teacher; but in Saint John, though the school has been established between nine and ten years, no buildings have been erected.

Rooms have been hired where they could be best obtained, but never such as were creditable to the Province, nor thoroughly comfortable to the teachers; though sometimes they have been hired at a high rent.

Suitable, and to a great extent, comfortable provision has been made for lunatics, paupers, and even criminals, but the respectable young men and women attending the Training School have been obliged to put up with such accommodation as could be found; sometimes, this has been better than at others, but at no time could thoroughly suitable premises be obtained.

For eight or nine successive years I have tried to bring this matter under public notice in my Reports, which were annually laid before the House of Assembly, but without success. During that period sums have been voted for aiding the erection of denominational and other school buildings, but the Provincial Normal School has had to assemble in some unoccupied building that the proprietor might choose to let for such a purpose.

This omission has been disreputable to us as a people. I have visited several Normal Schools in the United States and Canada

with a view of ascertaining what improvements might be made in our own. Some of the gentlemen, having charge of those institutions, have returned the visit. I cannot describe the shame and mortification I have felt that they should find us, at one time in a room in the Mechanics' Institute, with the privilege of entering by the back door, through a lobby used as a lumber room where exhibitors of Panoramas stowed away their empty boxes; at another time quartered in an old dilapidated house, decent outside, but poorly supplied with proper conveniences within; and now, in premises intended for stores, and but little adapted for school purposes. We were indeed happy at the last removal in securing for the use of the female teachers the Marine Hall; which is spacious, light and airy, but still not what we ought to have for a Provincial Institution. The impression on the mind of strangers has been unfavourable to the reputation of the Province, as well as mortifying to myself. My only consolation has been that I have annually brought the subject under the notice of the proper authorities, though without avail.

At first, the establishment of a Training School was naturally regarded as an experiment; but, long ere this, proper buildings should have been erected. In the States and Canada this has been done, and with no niggard hand.

In Upper Canada the sum of £15,000 was voted for the erection of school premises and £1500 a year for the payment of salaries and current expenses. We, of course, have no need of so large an outlay; but it may be hoped that when premises are erected, there will be a spirit manifested that shall be worthy of the Province. The erection of creditable and spacious premises in a populous and central neighbourhood, must of necessity be somewhat costly, but if due economy is attended to, it will be an outlay that we shall refer to with satisfaction.

BOARD OF EXAMINERS.

This is a very valuable appendage to the Normal School. If any teacher should be disposed to take matters too easily, and idle away his time, he remembers that at the close of his term, his attainments will be examined by competent gentlemen; and this thought operates as a wholesome stimulus.

Hitherto these gentlemen have acted without any remuneration. This, I think, should not be the case; their services should be fairly paid. Notwithstanding the absence of payment, the service has been faithfully performed by those gentlemen who from time to time have constituted the Board; one of them, Dr. Paterson, has acted from the establishment of the Board in 1849 till the present time, and has invariably been unremitting in his attention to the duties imposed upon him. If the length of the terms is

increased, a more protracted, and consequently more thorough examination will be requisite, but without remuneration it would be unreasonable to require so much from the Board.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

There is a very prevalent opinion among intelligent men that the natural resources of our Province are very partially developed, chiefly for want of a knowledge of the advantages of scientific agriculture. Various suggestions have been made to remedy so serious an evil.

Some have proposed that the people should be enlightened by travelling lecturers. Some that Agricultural Chemistry should be taught in our Common Schools. Others, that it should be a permanent branch of instruction in King's College. Again, it has been proposed that teachers shall be instructed in this science in the Provincial Training School. While others have urged the establishment of an Agricultural College, with which there should be connected a Model Farm.

All these propositions are worthy of attention; it may be hoped they will receive it, and result in the adoption of some feasible and practical plan, by which the standard of our agriculture will be raised and stores of natural wealth be produced of which we are now deprived. With reference to this subject the following suggestions are offered for consideration.

1st. That it is undesirable to establish any separate and additional Provincial Institution for this purpose if any existing one could be made available.

2nd. That an Agricultural Department might be appended to King's College, and a portion of the college grounds be converted into a Model Farm.

3rd. That the male department of the Provincial Training School might also be attached to King's College, and that portion of the pupil teachers who might be expected to be employed in rural districts might receive from the Professor instruction in Scientific Agriculture, and, from the Manager of the Model Farm, a knowledge of Practical Agriculture; while the more highly educated teachers, and those of decidedly literary tastes, might receive instruction from the other Professors in Mathematics and the higher branches of Literature.

If this plan were adopted it might involve the necessity of appointing a Professor to give instruction in the art of teaching, who might also give instruction in those lower branches of English literature for which provision is not at present made; or probably, by arrangement, these branches might be taken up by some of the present staff of Professors.

These propositions may be open to some objections, but their

adoption would render King's College much more extensively useful, and remove many of the objections at present urged against it. The present standard of that institution is supposed by many to be too high for the condition of our population. The plan proposed above would in some respects remedy the alleged evil. It would add several useful and practical branches without setting aside a single one now taught.

The Normal School department would then be greatly enhanced in value to the teachers. They would receive instruction in many additional and important subjects from professors of unquestioned high literary standing. And those who had been instructed in Scientific Agriculture, being spread over the Province as teachers would do much, directly and indirectly by their intercourse with Agriculturists to promote the more profitable cultivation of the soil; and if they relinquished teaching to return to Agriculture, they would work more profitably for themselves and still carry out the intentions of the Legislature by setting a good example to their neighbours; in fact they would multiply self-sustaining Model Farms. This combination of institutions would be to the Province a matter of considerable economy.

Arrangements could be made with some intelligent teacher in Fredericton for the pupil teachers to attend with him to gain a practical acquaintance with the daily routine of school duties. For a moderate remuneration, there is no doubt, a teacher would be found willing to receive them.

The attendance at the Female department is always sufficiently large to justify a separate establishment. Under the care of a Principal, and a lady to take charge of the Model School, it could be efficiently conducted at a moderate cost.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

This subject has been unnecessarily beset with difficulties by the overheated zeal of parties whose views differ very widely.

By some, it is seriously contended that secular education, if unaccompanied by direct religious training is worse than useless,—highly dangerous. The natural and only effect, we are told, would be to train up a race of "*clever devils*." While others, who think that *religious* instruction, must mean *sectarian* instruction, would banish it from our schools entirely.

We do not feel inclined to be led altogether by either of these parties.

As to the first, we cannot conceive that the captain of a vessel would be better without a knowledge of navigation, because he had not been favoured with a religious education, at any rate we should feel safer in a vessel navigated by one who had a knowledge of that science. Nor do we think that a builder had better be

ignorant of geometry and architectural design because he had not also the higher and better blessing. Sound religious instruction, which stores the mind with divine truth and impresses the heart with its value is a blessing of incalculable worth ; but supposing a person unhappily, to be deprived of this boon, it would still be surely better that he speak correctly than otherwise ; it must be still a good thing that a tradesman should understand accounts that he may be screened from imposition ; and that a farmer should know how to cultivate his land profitably, so that while the comforts of his own family are increased, provisions may be supplied to the consumer better in quality and more abundant in quantity. Illustrations might be multiplied to show that this position is untenable, but surely it would be a superfluous task.

On the other hand we have no sympathy with those who are anxious to banish every religious element from our common schools. The mind is more capable of receiving good impressions when young, than it will be in after years. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that good seed should be implanted at the most favourable season. This seems to be really the impression of every one after all ; the only anxiety is, lest the minds of our youth should be trained in a direction contrary to the parent's own conviction, and contaminated with what he conceives to be religious error. On this point the parent, whatever his denomination may be, has a right to be sensitive.

It, however, appears to me, that this matter is very imperfectly understood. That many who are anxious for religious formularies do not perceive the far greater importance of having a truly religious teacher. Not a proselyting teacher, zealous in propagating his own particular creed ; but a man who is desirous of exercising a healthy, moral, religious influence without interfering with the particular denominational views which the parent has a right to wish his child to hold. It should be thoroughly understood by every teacher, that while he strives to lead the young to walk in wisdom's path, he is in honour bound to neutrality as to sect or party. Our children will be engaged in polemical strife soon enough, they may be spared for a while. The teacher can be employed in a much nobler work.

The general question has recently been narrowed into one of a simple, tangible, but important character : namely, " Shall the Bible be excluded from our Schools ? " A great deal has lately been said on this subject, perhaps more than was needed. We have said that the question is one of importance, but we conceive that it is not one of great difficulty. That the Bible should be excluded from our Schools, is what no one should demand, or, if the demand was raised, should never be submitted to.

But justice should be done to all parties. In the document is-

sued by the Catholic Bishops at Halifax, they entirely repudiate any such thought. While they declare their sentiments so unequivocally, as by that document they seem to do, no one has a right to impute to them desires which they disavow.

Protestants have a right, if they please, to have their children taught from the sacred Scriptures, but they have no right to force the reading of them, or any particular version of them, on Catholic children. It would be tyranny in Catholics to prohibit the use of the Bible to Protestants, and it would be tyranny in Protestants to enforce it upon Catholics. Our present School Law is clear and just on this point, as shewn by the following extract:—

The Teacher shall "by precept and example seek to impress his scholars with the principles of religion, morality and loyalty. No pupil shall be required to read or study in or from any religious book, or join in any act of devotion objected to by his parents or guardians."—*Codified Laws, Ch. 51, Sec. 4.*

This appears to be explicit enough and can scarcely be improved by any new enactment.

DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Allied to the subject of religious instruction is that of separate Denominational Schools. There can be no objection to the existence of such institutions, if the parties interested wish to have them; but then, they should support them out of their own funds. It is not just that the provincial funds that belong to all denominations, should be employed to disseminate the peculiar sentiments of any particular sect.

Such institutions have of late years been multiplying and will continue to do so unless some prompt and decided action is taken by the House of Assembly. Every year the difficulty will become greater, the members of the respective denominations will unite for the mutual support of each other's claims, and by this Legislative log-rolling will defeat the best efforts of independent members; unless, indeed, some pressure from without should compel the withholding of these denominational grants. As however, external pressure is destructive to the independence of a deliberative Assembly, it is wiser to avoid it by timely and just legislation than to allow evils to creep in that will inevitably produce it.

It may be objected, that, as these institutions have had grants made to them for several years past, to withdraw them would peril their existence. This would be undoubtedly true, if the aid that they have been allowed to rely upon were withdrawn suddenly. It should only be done gradually, the grants being lessened at well-understood intervals, so that the friends of the respective institutions may rally round them and provide for their continued support.

It may be asserted, and has been, that these Institutions though connected with particular denominations are perfectly unsectarian,

(I refer now to the Seminaries and Academies.) If so, what need is there for their existence? But, would the respective denominations care to support them, unless in some way, directly or indirectly, they supported their peculiar interests? Would it not be better, except they are needed for denominational purposes, that they should be incorporated with King's College, and thus, on the one hand, share its liberal endowment, and on the other, create an esteem for it in the eyes of the public by its greatly increased usefulness?

It has further been objected that King's College is aristocratic and exclusively episcopal. It may be replied that the people can rectify the first themselves, by sending their sons and seeing that they get fair play. And as to the second point, I believe that the governors of the College, have in good faith endeavoured to remove every such impression. Still, such an opinion exists. For several years past, young men have occasionally advised with me as to where I would recommend them to go to obtain that advanced scholarship which they were determined to acquire; I have recommended them to King's College; they have almost invariably replied, that they knew that they should not get fair play there except they were aristocrats and episcopalians. I have endeavoured, but in vain, to dispel such impressions from their minds; they have in almost all instances left the Province to pursue their collegiate studies elsewhere.

If this prejudice exists, whether supported by facts or not, it is desirable to remove it. If the number of students is greatly increased, and the course of studies extended, an opportunity would be afforded for removing every prejudice in the appointment of the additional Professors from gentlemen of different denominations. The perfectly unsectarian character of the College would thus be fully guaranteed, and every pretext be removed for the continuance of denominational schools.

I confess that I am not very sanguine that these denominational grants will be given up. I fear that the evil is already too deeply rooted; but I am unwilling to let the opportunity pass without honestly declaring what my convictions in the matter are.

The foregoing principles are equally opposed to separate Common Schools, whether they are called Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, Catholic, or Baptist. If they were granted to one body, why not to another? And if each should demand separate schools, to what should we soon come? Men who should be brethren would grow up to be strangers to each other, and religious differences would be widened and perpetuated. But if justice be dealt out fairly to all parties there will not be the shadow of a necessity for separate schools.

Before adverting to local assessment, with which this pamphlet, (already much longer than was intended,) will close, a few passing

remarks will be made on one or two topics that affect the standing and comfort of teachers.

Persons wonder, sometimes, that so many teachers should abandon the employment so soon after engaging in it. If they were acquainted with the annoyances to which a teacher is subjected their wonder would cease.

First of all may be noticed the miserable shanties in which they are often required to teach, which are sufficient to disgust respectable young people of sensitive minds. They must, almost of necessity, lose all self-respect in going into them. Some bonus might be given for the erection of suitable buildings and supplying them with maps and apparatus; a certificate being required from the Inspector before the bounty is paid. Plans should be supplied, either at a cheap rate or gratuitously, to parties about to put up a school house. A cheap work of the kind was, I think, published a few years ago in Nova Scotia, compiled from Barnard's School Architecture.

Then again, there is much that is unnecessarily vexatious in the mode of the teachers' payment.

Boarding round is degrading. It does not exist to the same extent as formerly, but it is still clung to in many districts. What can be done by legislative enactment should be done. Something may be done by teachers themselves to remedy this evil; for if they determined not to engage on such conditions, the people would be glad to pay them in money for their labour, as they do carpenters, blacksmiths, and other mechanics. Surely teachers have as good a right to money payment as other people. A teacher could then board in those places where he was satisfied with the accommodations, and what is still more important, where he could quietly pursue those studies that are always requisite to an intelligent instructor; but, if he receives payment from the people in money, he is often exposed to further annoyance in the delayed payment of his provincial allowance. Teachers are generally in need of their money as soon as their time is completed, but sometimes they have to wait for months before it is paid.

This delay can be scarcely necessary; the teacher might be allowed to draw his money from the Deputy Treasurer of the district as soon as his work is performed, having been duly certified by the Trustees or persons appointed for that purpose by the Act of Assembly.

These, and many other annoyances that tend to drive teachers into other occupations, would be effectually remedied by the adoption of the system of

LOCAL ASSESSMENT.

So much has been written on this subject that there is little hope of saying anything new. Those who have read the valuable re-

ports published annually by the Chief Superintendent of schools, will be perfectly acquainted with the arguments urged in support of the system, and the answers to the objections brought against it. The system was adopted in Massachusetts at the foundation of the colony—has worked well, and as the result, the people of that State are pre-eminently distinguished for their intelligence, and the schools, for their excellence.

The adoption of local assessment would tend more than anything else to remove the evils that at present exist in our school system. The salary of the teacher would not probably be greater than it nominally is at the present time; but the teacher would really receive that which he agreed for; and receiving it in money would be in a better position than he is at present. Removals and changes would not be so frequent; for the teacher finding that he had something on which he could really depend, would settle down and exercise a healthy influence in the neighbourhood where he and his family resided. At present he has no home, he has no family, he cannot have, for with the constant change and uncertainty to which he is exposed, he cannot undertake the responsibility of domestic life; circumstances do not allow him to do so.

We should not then, to the same extent, be called to license new teachers to supply the place of those who are retiring from the work in disgust.

As for the schools, they would everywhere present an entirely different aspect. The people, having to pay their school tax would take care to keep their children at school, and instead of going into a school and finding twenty, fifteen, or ten pupils, we should find double the number, for they would *feel* that they were paying, and they would be anxious to have an equivalent. Again, as they would have to pay as much for a bad teacher as for a good one, they would take care as to whom they selected; in fact none but good teachers, as a general rule would be employed.

The main objection seems to be that it is "Direct Taxation," and therefore to be watched carefully against. It is, however, no more taxation than the plan adopted at present to those who engage teachers and honestly pay them. In fact, such parties would find the burden much lighter than it is at present.

Some years ago, in one of my annual Reports, I combated at some length one objection to which I may now briefly advert, namely: that some persons have been led to oppose local assessment from confounding it with provincial taxation. They have supposed that the money when collected, will go into the Provincial Treasury to be disposed of by the Government, and thus to strengthen the hands of a party to whom the contributor may be opposed. Such is not the case. It is simply an amount assessed by the people themselves, to be expended under their own direc-

tion, for the education of their own children, not one shilling of which will ever find its way into the public chest.

It is urged that it would operate unfairly by taxing rich men, who would not send their children to common schools; old men who have educated their children; and single men who have none to educate. It would be well to avoid such inconveniences if it were possible, but if such considerations were allowed to operate, in other matters legislation would come to a stand still; and improvements would be unknown. We could not have, on this principle, a tax for lighting or cleansing our streets, keeping up a supply of water for extinguishing fires, nor any other regulations for the security of life or property; for every plan that might be proposed would be found to press with some inequality upon some individual. The greatest amount of benefit to the greatest number of persons, is received as an acknowledged principle by all classes of political economists. Property is by common consent assessed for the support of paupers and for the punishment of criminals; pauperism and crime are in a great measure the offspring of ignorance; and as prevention is better than cure, it is perfectly reasonable that the property of the country should be assessed for the education of the country. It is surely wiser to have good school houses than spacious gaols.

It may be said, it will be said, that however good the system may be the people are not yet prepared for it. I believe that they are as much prepared now as they ever will be, and that however long the matter may be deferred, all legislation without it will be defective and unsatisfactory. I believe further, that the present is, in one respect, a peculiarly favourable season for adopting the plan; for if the term of the House had nearly expired the action of the members who voted for it would be brought against them by their opponents, who would try to make political capital of a noble act of duty, and turn it to their disadvantage. But if the step was taken now, before another election three or four years hence, the people would be so well satisfied with the change that political opponents would take nothing by their motion.

Should it be deemed advisable at the present time to pass by the assessment system, I would suggest that by some means a further bonus be given to those parties who voluntarily adopt it, that we may at least gradually be led to the adoption of a system that in the United States and Canada has been found to work so well.